GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:604
ANSWERED ON:03.03.2008
KILLING OF WORKERS IN NASIK
Pingle Shri Devidas Anandrao;Subba Shri Moni Kumar

Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government has received any complaint regarding deaths of some workers in an explosion in the factory at Pasta Village near Nasik;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any enquiry has been conducted by the Government in this regard;

(d) if so, the details and outcome thereof;

(e) whether any order was given to the said factory for producing or storing explosive materials;

(f) if so, the details thereof; and (g) the remedial action taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES)

(a): Yes, Sir.

(b): 21 workers dies in the explosion which occurred on 5th May, 2007 in M/s Premier Explo Chem Ltd. Pasta Village, Taluka Sinnar, Distt. Nasik, Maharashtra as per the report of the Expert Committee constituted by Government of Maharashtra.

(c): Yes, Sir. An enquiry has been conducted through an Experts Committee set-up by Government of Maharashtra under Section 90 of the Factories Act, 1948.

(d): Details are given in Annexure.

(e) to (f): The Controller of Explosives which regulates manufacture and storage of explosive material had given permission to M/s Premier Explo Chem Ltd., for producing and storing explosive materials. However, the premises was not registered under the Factories Act, 1948 and no licence was issued to the occupier of the premises for carrying out the manufacturing process.

(g): The Government of Maharashtra is the competent authority to enforce the provisions contained in the Factories Act, 1948 and the Rules made thereunder. Accordingly, the Government of Maharashtra has initiated prosecution against the occupier/manager of the factory on 10.7.2007 in the Court of Chief Judicial Magistrate, Nasik.

Annexure

ANNEXURE REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PART (d) OF LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 604 FOR ANSWER ON 3.3.2008 REGARDING KILLING OF WORKERS IN NASIK BY SHRI DEVIDAS PINGLE AND SHRI M.K. SUBBA.

The Committee has stated in their report that M/s. Premier Explo Chem Ltd., engaged in the manufacturing of emulsion explosives. The main raw materials used were Paraffin Wax / Lshs, Sorbitan Mono Oleate (SMO) , DG-6, Sodium Nitrite, Sulphur, Ammonium Nitrate, Zinc Nitrate And Sodium Nitrate. In the process of manufacturing, the Oxidizer Blend (OB) consisting of Ammonium Nitrate, Sodium Nitrate and Zinc Nitrate at 85oC and Fuel Blend (FB) consisting of Paraffin Wax and SMO (emulsifier) at 80oC are separately made and both are pumped into pre-mixture in the ratio of 94 : 6. The emulsion so formed is then pumped into holding tanks which is at an elevation of about 13 − 15 ft. from the pre-mixture. The emulsion mixture is dropped from the holding tank into a blender by gravity. Prilled Ammonium Nitrate and Sulphur / atomized Aluminium powder are also added manually in the blender. After thorough blending, the mix is then dropped into the hopper. From hopper the emulsion matrix is bifurcated into two separate roto pumps. Each roto pump pushes the emulsion into cartridging machine through static mixer. The gassing agent (Sodium Nitrite Solution) is also injected online into the emulsion which sensitizes the emulsion Matrix. The small dia cartridges are made in Cartridge Machine (KP machine) and transferred onto dry conveyor belt for cooling and packaging. The conveyor belt speed is adjusted such that cartridges residence time on conveyor belt is limited to 3-4 minutes and final product density attains 1.15-1.2 gm/cc. Then cartridges are further cooled in cold water and then dried and packed.

On the day of the explosion, the temperature of the FB tank material was lower than required. This led to decrease in the temperature of in-process material leading to thickening more than normal. This temperature decrease was more in the blender material where prilled ammonium nitrate at room temperature was added. Due to the lowering of temperature and thickening of the process material, the discharge flow from roto pumps probably stopped and the pumps continued to run therein leading to high temperature and pressure in the process material trapped inside the roto pumps. This abnormal situation may have caused an explosion in one or more pumps generating a shockwave, which caused immediate explosion of the entire material in the manufacturing shed. In the above accident, 21 persons / workers including 3 adolescents have died.